BRUBAKER · MEDINA · VLASCO · FAIRBAIRN

YOUNG AVENGERS®

PRESENTS

PATRIOT

with great respect to Byrne, Kirby, Romita & Zeck.

MARVEL

LIMITED SERIES

1 OF 6

United by friendship and bravery, Patriot, Hawkeye, Wiccan, Hulkling, Stature, Speed and the Vision are the Young Avengers, following in the footsteps of Earth's mightiest heroes! While superhuman registration temporarily caused the team to cease operations, they are ready to return to the streets to take on the threats no single super hero can withstand!

YOUNG AVENGERS PRESENTS PATRIOT

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PATRIOT

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SOMETIMES...SOMETIMES IT'S *REALLY HARD* NOT TO HATE THIS COUNTRY.

--BUT WHEN THE *TUSKEGEE EXPERIMENT* WAS FINALLY BROUGHT TO LIGHT IN 1972...

...P.H.S. OFFICIALS REMAINED *UNREPENTANT* ABOUT THEIR USE OF ILLITERATE BLACK MEN AS *LAB* RATS.

HELL, SOMETIMES IT'S REALLY HARD NOT TO JUST HATE EVERYONE IN THE WHOLE WORLD, ACTUALLY.

IT WASN'T UNTIL 1997 THAT THE GOVERNMENT APOLOGIZED, WHEN *PRESIDENT CLINTON* SAID:

"THE UNITED STATES DID SOMETHING THAT WAS *WRONG*--DEEPLY, PROFOUNDLY, MORALLY WRONG...AND *CLEARLY RACIST.*"

OR AT LEAST...EVERYONE IN THIS SCHOOL.

IF IT'S SO BAD HERE, WHY DON'T YOU MOVE TO RUSSIA-- OR *IRAQ?*

YEAH, MY UNCLE'S NEIGHBOR WAS IN *9-11*, SO SCREW YOU, ELI!

YOU'RE THE RACIST! EVERYTHING'S ABOUT RACE *TO YOU!*

BOYS! BOYS! *PLEASE!*

BE *QUIET!*

LET ME REMIND YOU, THIS IS *HISTORY CLASS*, AND THERE'S NOTHING UN-AMERICAN ABOUT *EXAMINING* OUR HISTORY...

...*INCLUDING* THE THINGS WE'VE DONE WRONG.

YEAH, YOU'D THINK IN A PLACE BUILT ON *SLAVERY* AND *GENOCIDE*, THAT--

ELI. *PLEASE...*

I THINK WE'VE HAD *ENOUGH* CONTROVERSY FOR *ONE DAY.*

SORRY, MISS MARTENS...

YOU'LL BE GETTING AN *A*, BY THE WAY. NICE WORK.

YEAH, NICE WORK *TRASHING* YOUR COUNTRY.

SHOULDN'T YOU BE OUT STEALING CARS WITH YOUR *DAD*, TANCREDO?

OR DID HE GIVE YOU THE DAY OFF?

THAT'S IT!

PLEASE... DO IT.

AND SOMETIMES IT'S HARD NOT TO HATE *YOURSELF*, TOO.

WHY DID I LET THAT MORON *GET* TO ME?

THREE-DAY SUSPENSION. GRANDMA'S GONNA KILL ME.

HELL, I HADN'T *HELD BACK*, I COULD'VE KILLED TANCREDO...

LUCKY I DIDN'T PUT HIM IN THE HOSPITAL AS IT IS.

CAPTA

OH, AND LOOK AT *THIS*... ANOTHER ONE.

CAPTAIN AMERICA LIVES!

MAN, THESE THINGS ARE *EVERYWHERE* LATELY.

IT'S DEPRESSING, SERIOUSLY.

SORRY, PEOPLE, THE ONLY CAPTAIN AMERICA *LIVING* NOW IS MY *GRANDPA*, AND HE'S NOT ABOUT TO *FIX* THIS MESS WE'RE IN.

NOT AFTER EVERYTHING HE GOT *PUT THROUGH*... NOT IN THE CONDITION IT LEFT HIM IN.

HEY--!

IS THAT--IS THAT *BUCKY?*

ERNIE

NO WAY.

HEY! HEY--HOLD UP!

WAIT!

WIDMORE INDUST

DAMN...

WAS THAT EVEN HIM?

WHAT THE HELL WOULD *HE* BE DOIN' HERE?

HEY, GRANDMA... WHO WAS THAT GUY THAT JUST LEFT?

JUST SOMEONE DROPPING BY TO SEE YOUR *GRANDFATHER.*

WHAT *FOR?*

I'M NOT SURE THAT'S ANY OF OUR BUSINESS.

YEAH, HE JUST LOOKED KINDA YOUNG AND *WHITE* TO BE VISITIN' THE *BLACK* CAPTAIN AMERICA.

ELI, WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT MAN'S ADMIRERS COULD FILL A BOOK.

I GUESS...SO, WHAT'D THEY TALK ABOUT, THEN?

I HAVE NO IDEA...BUT THAT YOUNG MAN DID *MOST* OF THE TALKING.

ALTHOUGH I DID HEAR ISAIAH SAY MORE THAN HE *USUALLY* DOES.

THAT WAS NICE.

SO, YOU DIDN'T GET A *NAME?*

IT WAS JAMES SOMETHING... I DIDN'T INTERROGATE THE MAN, ELI.

IT WAS CLEAR THAT ISAIAH *WANTED* TO SPEAK WITH HIM.

IF YOU'RE *SO INTERESTED*, WHY DON'T YOU GO ASK YOUR GRANDFATHER?

YOU CAN BRING HIM HIS *LUNCH* FOR ME WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.

OKAY... I *WILL.*

HOLD ON...WHY AREN'T YOU IN *SCHOOL?*

IT'S ONLY 12:30.

UMMM... CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS LATER?

MY GRANDFATHER, ISAIAH BRADLEY, WAS THE FIRST CAPTAIN AMERICA... SORT OF.

HE AND A LOT OF OTHER BLACK SOLDIERS WERE EARLY TEST SUBJECTS OF THE EXPERIMENT THAT ENDED UP CREATING THE SUPER-SOLDIER SERUM.

AND WHEN ALL THE OTHER TEST SUBJECTS DIED, GRANDDAD TOOK AN EARLY CAP UNIFORM AND WENT AWOL TO STOP THE GERMANS FROM MAKING THEIR OWN SUPER-SOLDIER.

FOR THAT HE WAS *COURT-MARTIALED* AND LOCKED AWAY IN *LEAVENWORTH* WHILE THE U.S. ARMY COVERED UP THE WHOLE SCANDAL.

WHEN HE WAS FINALLY EXONERATED IN THE 60s, SO MUCH DAMAGE HAD BEEN DONE...FROM THE EXPERIMENTS *AND* THE PUNISHMENT.

MOST DAYS HE BARELY SAYS TWO WORDS...

HI, ELI... THANKS.

HEY, GRAMPA, WHO WAS THAT *MAN* YOU WERE TALKING TO?

SOLDIER... WANTED TO TALK ABOUT...

HNNH... WANTED TO TALK...

THAT'S OKAY, GRAMPA, JUST EAT YOUR LUNCH... IT DOESN'T MATTER.

IT'S BECAUSE OF MY GRANDFATHER THAT I BECAME A YOUNG AVENGER.

BUT IT'S HARD SOMETIMES, TO BE A BLACK KID CARRYING A NAME LIKE "PATRIOT."

I REMEMBER TALKING TO CAPTAIN AMERICA ABOUT THAT BEFORE HE DIED, AND HE EXPLAINED WHAT PATRIOTISM MEANT TO HIM...

AND HOLDING IT *ACCOUNTABLE* WHEN IT FAILED. I REMEMBER HE SAID:

IT WASN'T ABOUT BLINDLY SUPPORTING YOUR GOVERNMENT.

IT WAS ABOUT KNOWING WHAT YOUR COUNTRY *COULD BE*, WHAT IT SHOULD BE...AND TRYING TO LEAD IT THERE THROUGH YOUR EXAMPLE.

THERE'S *NOTHING* PATRIOTIC ABOUT CORRUPTION OR COVER-UPS...OR DEFENDING THEM.

BUT EXPOSING THEM, WELL, *THAT* TAKES A HERO.

MAN, NOW THAT HE'S GONE... I REALLY *HATE* HOW MUCH I *RESENTED HIM* FOR WHAT WAS DONE TO MY GRAMPA.

HEY, KATE... YOU FEEL LIKE SNEAKING OUT TONIGHT?

GOT SOMETHING I GOTTA DO.

TOOK SOME FAST TALKING TO GET OUT OF BEING PUT ON RESTRICTION, BUT I *MANAGED.*

TAPPA TAPPA TAPP

WHEN GRANDMA NOTICES I SNUCK OUT *IN COSTUME*, THOUGH, IT WON'T BE SO EASY.

YOU GUYS, WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* HERE?

MY FOLKS'LL *FREAK* IF THEY SEE YOU.

SO LET US IN, DORK.

SORRY TO JUST SHOW UP, BILLY, BUT I'M TRYING TO FIND SOMEONE...

...AND KATE THOUGHT WE'D WASTE LESS TIME ON IT IF WE HAD YOUR HELP.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT, BLAME ME. I *DID* SAY TO CALL FIRST.

THAT'S OKAY, MOM'S PRACTICALLY *MONITORING MY CALLS*, ANYWAY.

SHE KEEPS TELLING ME TO BE LIKE *STATURE.* JOIN THE INITIATIVE.

DANG... LEAST MY GRANDPARENTS AREN'T *LIKE THAT.*

YEAH... SO, *WHO* DO YOU WANT ME TO FIND?

WE WERE HOPING YOU COULD DO YOUR MAGIC THING AND TRACK DOWN *BUCKY* FOR US.

REMEMBER HOW KATE AND ME *MET HIM* LAST CHRISTMAS?

LIKE I'M GOING TO FORGET THAT, *EVER.*

SO, CAN YOU DO IT?

I NEVER TRACKED ANYONE I DON'T KNOW BEFORE, BUT I'LL *TRY...*

I WANT TO FIND BUCKY BARNES... I WANT TO FIND BUCKY BARNES...SHOW ME WHERE BUCKY IS...LET ME SEE HIM...

OKAY. I THINK I FOUND HIM...AND I MADE A PATH FOR YOU, TOO.

LET ME JUST OPEN THIS *PORTAL* WIDER...

YOU WANT TO COME WITH US?

I WISH...BUT... I'D GET IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.

JUST...TELL HIM I'M A BIG FAN.

YEAH, WE'LL GET HIS AUTOGRAPH FOR YOU.

DON'T MOCK. JUST GO.

SHH-KAZZZ

...?

BILLY'S ROOM SPEAK FRIEND AND ENTER

BILLY? WHAT'S GOING ON UP HERE?

WHAT? NOTHING. JUST DOING MY HOMEWORK.

IS IT DINNER TIME?

UHHG... THAT ALWAYS FEELS SO...LIKE I'M GONNA HURL.

I KNOW. BUT CHECK IT OUT. THAT'S THE BIKE I SAW HIM DRIVING AWAY ON.

BILLY DID IT.

YEAH, BUT WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE...?

OH... NEVER MIND.

YEAH, LOOKS LIKE WE GOT HERE JUST IN TIME.

LET'S GET TO IT.

AYE, AYE, CAPTAIN...

...AS IF I NEEDED TO BE TOLD...

SKAZZ

WHAT--?

DON'T *SWEAT* IT, BUCKY! WE GOT YOUR BACK!

ELI? WHAT ARE *YOU TWO* DOING HERE?!

SAVING YOU, *OBVIOUSLY.*

I WAS DOING *FINE* ON MY OWN.

NOW I HAVE TO LOOK OUT FOR TWO KIDS...SO, *THANKS.*

UH...YOU'RE WELCOME...?

MULTIPLE TARGETS, REEVALUATE ATTACK...

MULTIPLE TARGETS, REEVALUATE ATTACK...

MULTIPLE TARGETS, REEVALUATE ATTACK...

FOCUS ON TARGET: ARCHER

FOCUS ON TARGET: ARCHER

FOCUS ON TARGET: ARCHER

BZZATT

OWW!

KATE!!

BUCKY, THEY'RE GOIN' FOR KATE!

I SEE THAT...JUST GIMME...

WHAMM

...ONE SECOND...

KRAK

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

FRAZZT
FRAZZT
FRAZZT

WOW...AND YIKES.
PLEASE TELL ME THOSE THINGS WERE NOT PEOPLE...

THEY'RE CALLED A MODOC SQUAD--MILITARY ORGANISMS DESIGNED ONLY FOR COMBAT.
A.I.M. BUILT THEM IN THE LAST FEW YEARS...THEY FIGHT WITH A HIVE-MIND.

THEY'RE BASICALLY HUMAN ROBOTS NOW, AND THE PROCEDURE IS IRREVERSIBLE.
SO WE DID THEM A FAVOR, KATE. DON'T WORRY.
THIS PLACE IS AN A.I.M. FACILITY?

IT WAS *SUPPOSED* TO BE... BUT THIS IS THE THIRD ONE I'VE FOUND *ABANDONED.*

EXCEPT FOR THEIR FAIL-SAFE *ATTACK SQUAD.*

LOOKS LIKE A.I.M. IS TRYING TO DROP *EVEN FURTHER* OFF THE RADAR THAN USUAL...

AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.

YOU MEAN, ARE THEY *ON THE RUN,* OR ARE THEY ABOUT TO *DO SOMETHING?*

EXACTLY.

WHY WERE YOU AFTER THEM?

MOSTLY 'CAUSE I'M TRYING TO FIND OUT WHAT THE RED SKULL IS UP TO.

THE *RED SKULL?!*

DON'T GET EXCITED, ELI.

YOU'RE STAYING *A MILE* AWAY FROM THIS, BELIEVE ME.

THERE'S A *FIRESTORM* COMING, AND I WON'T HAVE YOU KIDS GETTING BURNED BY IT.

HEY, WAIT!
I WANTED TO--HEY!
DAMN IT. I WANTED TO TALK TO HIM...
BUT HE DOESN'T EVEN TAKE US SERIOUSLY.
THAT'S NOT IT.
THEN WHAT?
JUST WHAT HE SAID. HE CARES...ABOUT US.
IT'S SORT OF IRRITATING, BUT ALSO...KIND OF HOT.
ANYWAY, YOU CAN STILL TALK TO HIM. I PUT A TRACKER ON HIS BIKE.
WHAT?!
I'M A GENIUS, REMEMBER?
YOU ARE, KATE...
BUT HE IS WAY TOO OLD FOR YOU...YOU KNOW THAT, RIGHT?

IT TAKES ME AN HOUR TO FIND HIM.

AND REQUIRES A TRIP ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO BROOKLYN.

HOPE HE DOESN'T MIND SOME COMPANY.

UM... HELLO...?

IN HERE, ELI...

OH, WERE YOU *EXPECTIN'* ME?

ONCE I FOUND THE *BUG* ON MY *INDIAN*, YEAH.

YOU ON YOUR OWN THIS TIME?

I WANT YOU FOR U.S. ARMY

NEAREST RECRUITING STATION

YEAH...I WAS HOPIN' ME AND YOU...

HEY, WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE?

THIS WAS WHERE *STEVE* LIVED... I'VE BEEN SPENDING SOME TIME HERE, THE LAST FEW WEEKS.

OH...

UM...SO WHY WERE YOU AT MY PLACE TODAY? TALKING TO MY GRANDPA?

I WANTED TO PAY MY RESPECTS, I SUPPOSE.

AND TALK TO SOMEONE WHO WORE THE *UNIFORM*...YOUR GRANDDAD'S A *REAL* HERO.

I THINK STEVE WOULD'VE LIKED HIM A LOT, IF THEY'D MET BACK THEN.

YEAH, I THINK SO, TOO... I *GUESS*.

WHAT'S ON YOUR *MIND*, ELI?

I DON'T KNOW... A BUNCH'A STUFF...

I MEAN... YOU KNOW ABOUT MY GRANDPA, AND WHAT THEY DID TO HIM...

AND YOU KNOW HOW THIS COUNTRY HAS TREATED BLACK PEOPLE, LIKE... *A LOT.*

AND, I DON'T KNOW...I GUESS I SET OUT TO HONOR MY GRANDPA.

AND THEN AFTER I MET CAP... *YOUR* CAP...I STOPPED BEING ANGRY SO MUCH.

BUT *NOW?*

NOW THAT HE'S *DEAD*, AND WITH THE WHOLE REGISTRATION THING AND ALL...I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT *MEANS* ANYMORE.

TO BE A BLACK KID CALLING MYSELF "PATRIOT", Y'KNOW?

'CAUSE I DON'T REALLY FEEL LIKE I *LOVE* THIS COUNTRY A LOT OF THE TIME.

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN... BUT...

MAN, THIS WAS *WAY MORE* STEVE'S TERRITORY THAN MINE...

BUT I THINK YOU HAVE TO REALIZE THAT AMERICA IS *BIGGER* THAN ITS POLITICS OR ITS PROBLEMS.

STEVE WOULD SAY, AMERICA IS AN *IDEA.*

BUT I'M NOT SURE I REALLY KNOW WHAT THAT *MEANS*, SOMETIMES.

YEAH, ME EITHER.

SEE, STEVE ALWAYS TRIED TO SEE THE *BEST* IN EVERYONE, AND I'M NOT LIKE THAT.

BUT I'M *TRYING* TO BE, YOU KNOW?

I THINK, JUST LIKE *MOST PEOPLE*, AMERICA ISN'T *JUST* ONE THING.

IT'S NOT JUST SLAVERY AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE INDIANS... IT'S NOT *JUST* WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR GRANDDAD.

IT'S ALSO THE NEW DEAL, AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT, AND DEMOCRACY...

AND *MARTIN LUTHER KING.*

YEAH. BUT REALLY, IF I WERE YOU, *I'D* BE HAVING A HARD TIME CARRYING THAT NAME, TOO.

THE DIFFERENCE IS, I KNEW THE *FIRST MAN* TO CARRY IT... JEFF MACE.

AND I THINK JEFF WOULD BE *PROUD* TO HAVE SOMEONE AS SMART AND BRAVE AS YOU KEEPING THE NAME ALIVE.

JUST LIKE HE KEPT *CAP'S* NAME ALIVE FOR A TIME.

AWHILE BACK, DURING THAT WHOLE SUPER HERO *CIVIL WAR*, I REMEMBER READING SOME EDITORIAL...

SOMEONE SAYING CAP WAS IN THE WRONG, *OUT OF STEP* WITH THE PUBLIC...

...THAT HE NEEDED TO "FIND AMERICA AGAIN", OR SOME NONSENSE.

YEAH, I REMEMBER THAT, TOO.

AND ALL I COULD THINK WAS, NO...AMERICA NEEDS TO FIND HIM.

BECAUSE IF THERE WERE MORE PEOPLE HERE LIKE HIM, OR LIKE YOUR GRANDDAD...

...THEN MAYBE IT'D BE EASIER FOR A KID LIKE YOU TO CALL YOURSELF A PATRIOT.

I KNOW, JUST LIKE YOU, STEVE HATED A LOT OF THINGS THIS COUNTRY HAS DONE.

BUT SOMEHOW, HE STILL MANAGED TO SEE THE DREAM. THE IDEA THAT MADE THIS PLACE GREAT TO BEGIN WITH.

SO, MAYBE THAT'S WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU NOW.

IT MEANS TRYING TO LIVE UP TO THAT LEGACY.

HUNH... YEAH. MAYBE.

I THINK I GET YOU.

GOOD, 'CAUSE I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT MY POINT IS.

SURE YOU DO. YOU JUST MISS HIM.

THAT'S TRUE... I MISS A LOT OF PEOPLE, BUT HIM MORE THAN ANYONE.

SO, YOU WANNA TELL ME ABOUT THIS JEFF MACE GUY?

ELI, I'D BE HAPPY TO...HAVE A SEAT...

NEXT: HULKLING

E
E
M
R
P
I
ZOMBIE